



MAZONIA STATE FISH & WILDLIFE AREA

Gar Lake (Mazonia Lake #9)

FISHERIES STATUS SUMMARY

LOCATION – Gar Lake (Lake #9) is located within the Mazonia State Fish and Wildlife Area Main Unit, 3 miles southwest of Braidwood in Grundy County on Illinois Route 53 and Huston Road.

DESCRIPTION – Gar Lake is one of the largest impoundments in the Mazonia Main Unit covering 34.0 surface acres. It is connected by a narrow channel to Carp Lake (Lake #8). Gar Lake also receives water from the Mazon River during high water periods, which has resulted in diversification of the fish population. Shoreline access is limited by extensive stands of tall reed grass. Boaters can access the lake by launching at the Carp Lake ramp. Gar Lake is closed to fishing during upland game and waterfowl season. Following the completion of the hunting seasons, it reopens for ice fishing dependent upon ice conditions.

MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES: Gar Lake surveyed on an alternate year basis. Fish stocking has included channel catfish and northern pike (discontinued due to poor results).

STATUS OF THE SPORT FISHERY – *No special mercury advisory or other contaminant-related consumption advisories pertain.* A SILVER CARP was observed in 2017 but avoided capture.

LARGEMOUTH BASS – The largemouth bass collection increased in 2017 (up 57.7% from 2015), due primarily to the large number of young-of-the-year bass which were collected. The high number of these young bass is reflected in a decline in the overall average length collected, 8.8". The number of bass which were 8" and larger actually dropped, falling well below the long-term average. There were also declines in the number of quality size bass (12"+) as well as legal size fish. Hopefully with the favorable recruitment of the 2017 year class, this population will improve.

BLUEGILL – Following a poor showing in the 2015 survey, the bluegill population appears to have rebounded in 2017. Larger bluegills were once again prevalent while the average size increased to 5.6". Although no bluegills 8" and larger were collected, fish which were 7" and larger accounted for nearly 10% of the 2017 collection.

CRAPPIE – Although both species of crappie are present in Gar Lake, white crappie comprised 92% of the total crappie collection in the 2017 survey. Trap netting accounted for the majority of the crappie collected and catch rates for that gear type were the best they've been in many years. Larger crappie were more prevalent in this survey as is reflected in the average length which, at 10.2", was a more than one inch over the long-term average. Good numbers of larger crappie were present in the 2017 survey and the percentage of crappie which were 9" and greater exceeded the long-term average. Preferred size crappie (10" plus) accounted for 55.1% of the collection.

CHANNEL CATFISH – Catfish up to 21" were collected in the spring 2017 survey while the average size collected was 19". Channel catfish are stocked on a rotational basis to augment the population as natural reproduction and recruitment are suspected to be low. Flathead catfish have been collected in past surveys.

GAR – Three species of gar have been collected from this lake with longnose gar the most prevalent. Longnose gar in excess of 40" are routinely collected during IDNR surveys.

ADDITIONAL FISH SPECIES: A variety of other species which can be caught include common carp, bullheads and various sucker species. In 2017 a SILVER CARP was observed but avoided capture.

Length of Selected Species Collected in the 2017 Fall Survey (all gear types combined)

Species	Number of Fish Caught in Each Length Group (Inches)								
	0-5	6-8	9-11	12-14	15-19	20-24	25-29	30+	Total
Largemouth bass	42	20	15	29	14	3	0	0	123
Bluegill	137	114	0	0	0	0	0	0	251
Crappie (white and black)	1	10	36	3	0	0	0	0	50
Channel catfish	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	3
Longnose gar	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	2

FISHING REGULATIONS – Statewide fishing regulations apply at this lake (see current Illinois Fishing Information booklet and IFISHILLINOIS website <http://www.ifishillinois.org/> for specific details).

Additional Site Specific fishing regulations:

Boaters - Trolling motor only, except Monster and Ponderosa Lake – gasoline outboards allowed, no wake

All fish species - Two pole and line fishing only.

Bluegill or Redear Sunfish – 10 fish daily creel limit on Ponderosa, unlimited elsewhere

Channel Catfish – 6 fish daily creel limit.

Largemouth Bass – 15” minimum length limit; 3 fish daily creel limit.

White, Black, or Hybrid Crappie – 10 fish daily creel limit

CONTACT INFORMATION – Mazonia/Braidwood State Fish & Wildlife Area: 815/237-0063.
IDNR Fisheries County Fish Biologist: 630/553-6680.